



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bull Trout Draft Recovery Plan

Olympic Peninsula Recovery Unit

What areas are included in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit?

The Olympic Peninsula Management Unit is located in the northwestern corner of Washington. It is bordered by Hood Canal to the east, Strait of Juan de Fuca to the north, Pacific Ocean to the west and the Lower Columbia and Puget Sound Recovery Units to the south. It extends across portions of Grays Harbor, Clallam, Mason, Pacific, and Jefferson counties. All of the major river basins initiate from the Olympic Mountains.

The Olympic Peninsula Management Unit is one of two units within the Coastal-Puget Sound Distinct Population Segment (DPS). The Coastal-Puget Sound DPS is significant to the species as a whole because it contains the only anadromous forms of bull trout in the coterminous United States, thus, occurring in a unique ecological setting. Also unique to this population segment is the overlap in distribution with Dolly Varden, another native char species extremely similar in appearance to bull trout, but distinct genetically.

How much of the area is proposed as critical habitat?

This unit includes proposed critical habitat areas totaling 779 miles of streams, 8,504 acres of lakes and 419 miles of marine shoreline. The stream mileage represents approximately eight percent of the total stream distance in the management unit found on 1:100,000 scale map coverage.

Who developed the draft Bull Trout Recovery Plan and critical habitat proposal?

The draft recovery plan for bull trout was developed through a collaboration of local, State, Federal, and Tribal biologists, private individuals, and organizations with knowledge of bull trout and the habitats they depend on for survival. The recovery team began development of the plan in 2000, after the species was listed in November 1999.

The critical habitat proposal was based in large part on information developed by the recovery teams and supplemented with even more recent information on the current distribution and habitat characteristics of the species. We relied heavily on information

developed for the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit Recovery Plan.

What is the relationship between the draft Bull Trout Recovery Plan and the critical habitat proposal?

The draft recovery and critical habitat proposal are closely linked. The information developed by the recovery unit teams, and the science underlying that information, are the basis for the critical habitat proposals. However, critical habitat is designed to provide for the conservation of the species by identifying those areas essential for conservation and requiring special management, whereas a recovery plan is a much larger blueprint providing guidance for the eventual recovery and de-listing of a species.

Who would be affected by recovery efforts and a critical habitat designation?

A recovery plan is advisory only and carries no regulatory authority. It is the Fish and Wildlife Service's estimation of the actions necessary for the recovery of the species. Agencies, communities or

individuals are encouraged to take voluntary actions described in the recovery plan to benefit bull trout.

Federal agencies are required to consult with the Fish and Wildlife Service on actions they carry out, fund, or authorize that might affect critical habitat. It is important to note that in most cases, this is already occurring under the section 7 interagency consultation requirements of the Endangered Species Act. Non-Federal entities, including private landowners, that may also be affected could include, for example, those seeking a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 permit under the Clean Water Act to build an in-water structure, those seeking Federal approval to discharge effluent into the aquatic environment, or those seeking Federal funding to implement private property improvements, where such actions affect the aquatic environment that has been designated as critical habitat. But again, in most cases where this link between activities on private lands and Federal funding, permitting, or authorization exists, consultation under section 7 of

the Endangered Species Act is already occurring.

What is the status of bull trout in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit?

Bull trout in this management unit are dispersed throughout both fresh and marine waters. Within the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit there are six core areas with a total of ten local populations.

Bull trout are found throughout the Hoh River basin with primary spawning areas occurring in the upper reaches of the Hoh River and South Fork Hoh River. Bull trout from the Hoh River have also been documented using the marine waters and coastal tributaries, most likely for feeding, over-wintering, and migration.

Long-term monitoring in the North Fork Skokomish River indicates bull trout abundance has declined to around 100 fish in recent years and in the South Fork Skokomish River total population is estimated to be less than 100 fish. Although very few spawning sites have been located in the Dungeness and Queets core areas, there is no long term monitoring in these core areas and

the overall status and distribution is unknown. In the Elwha core area bull trout persist above the dams, but the anadromous life form was eliminated by construction of the two dams.

Bull trout have recently been documented in Grays Harbor, its tributaries, and the lower Chehalis River. Bull trout have also been documented in tributaries to the Straits of Juan de Fuca. These areas are not believed to support spawning populations but likely provide important foraging, migration, and overwintering habitat.

The Satsop River is historic bull trout habitat, but the presence of bull trout has not been documented since the 1960s, and they may have been extirpated from the basin. Although there are historic records of bull trout use of Hood Canal tributaries, there are no recent records. The Olympic Peninsula Recovery Team recommends that expanded surveys be conducted in each basin to verify status and distribution.

What are the threats to bull trout in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit?

Historic uses, especially water diversions, hydropower development, forestry, agriculture, fisheries management and residential and urban development within the core areas may have significantly reduced populations of bull trout. Lasting effects from some, but



not all of these early land and water developments still act to limit bull trout production in core areas. Threats from current activities include aspects of operation and maintenance of dams and other diversion structures, forest management practices, agriculture practices, fisheries management, road construction and maintenance, and residential development and urbanization. Historic and current incidental mortality to bull trout from Tribal and recreational fisheries are considered a significant threat to populations on the Olympic Peninsula, as is hybridization, competition and potential predation from non-native brook trout.

What are the recovery goals and objectives?

The goal of the bull trout recovery plan is to ensure the long-term persistence of self-sustaining, complex, interacting groups of bull trout distributed throughout the species' native range so that the species can be de-listed.

What are the criteria for measuring recovery?

Recovery will be measured according to four criteria: distribution, abundance, population trends and connectivity in the watershed. The recovery plan includes specific, quantifiable standards for each of the following criteria:

1. Distribution: Maintain or expand the current distribution of bull trout in the 10 identified local populations spread throughout the Skokomish, Dungeness, Elwa, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault core areas; and restore or confirm spawning distribution in two additional potential local populations: Brown Creek in the Skokomish River core area and Little River in the Elwa core area.

2. Abundance: Achieve minimum estimated abundance of at least 5,700 adult spawners in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit including at least 1,000 spawning adults in the Dungeness, Elwa, Hoh, Queets, and Quinault core areas, and at least 700 spawning adults in the Skokomish core area.

3. Trend: Restore adult bull trout to exhibit stable or increasing trends in abundance at or above the recovered abundance level within core areas in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit based on 10 to 15 years (representing two generations) of monitoring data.

4. Connectivity: Restore connectivity by identifying and addressing specific existing and potential barriers to bull trout movement in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit. These criteria will be met when intact migratory corridors connect all local populations within each core area to provide the opportunity for genetic exchange and maintaining life history diversity.

What actions will be necessary to recover bull trout in the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit?

Actions required for bull trout recovery are protecting, restoring and maintaining suitable habitat conditions and water quality. This can be achieved by identifying diversions or dams (such as the Glines Canyon and Elwa Dams) that impede fish passage, providing fish passage where feasible, and preventing development of new barriers to fish passage. Eliminating or modifying culverts and other barriers to fish passage, such as the tidegate on the Skokomish River, and maintaining or improving water quality in bull trout core areas or core habitat is also recommended. Examples of this include improving routine road maintenance practices to reduce sediment in nearby streams and restoring and protecting riparian areas along waterways for their water-cooling effect.

Improving habitat conditions in and along mainstem rivers is critical to preserving the anadromous life history form. These river corridors provide important foraging and overwintering habitat for bull trout, and the vital link between their freshwater spawning habitats and their marine foraging habitats. For more details, please see the Bull Trout draft Recovery Plan for the Coastal Puget Sound Distinct

Population Segment, Olympic Peninsula Management Unit, Volume II.

There are a number of research needs that have been identified for this Management Unit. A high priority goal for the Olympic Peninsula Recovery Unit is to acquire more complete information on the current distribution and abundance of bull trout within each core area. Additional information is needed on bull trout use of and distribution in estuarine and marine waters of the Olympic Peninsula.

How long will recovery take?

A recovery plan is advisory only and carries no regulatory authority; therefore it is difficult to determine how long it will take to recover bull trout.

In the Clark Fork Recovery Unit the current status of bull trout is better than in many other portions of the range, but a tremendous amount of work remains to be done to reconnect and restore impaired habitat and to cope with threats from nonnative species. It may be 3 to 5 bull trout generations (15 to 25 years), or possibly longer, before significant reductions can be made in the identified threats to the species and bull trout can be considered eligible for de-listing.

How much will recovery cost?

The total cost for bull trout recovery in the Puget Sound Recovery Unit is estimated at \$68.1 million spread over a 25-year period, or an average of \$2.8 million per year. If the time frame for recovery can be reduced, lower estimated costs would occur.

These costs are attributed to bull trout conservation, however, many costs are shared with salmon recovery efforts, and other aquatic species will also benefit.

How can I obtain copies of the documents?

The documents, along with maps, fact sheets, photographs and other materials may be found on the Pacific Region's website at .

How can I comment?

The Service will accept comments until October 28, 2004, on its bull trout draft recovery plan in the Puget Sound and Olympic Peninsula regions in Washington. Comments may be mailed to Ken Berg, U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service, Western Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, 510 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey WA 98503.

The Service will accept public comments on its proposal to designate critical habitat for the Coastal-Puget Sound population of bull trout until August 25, 2004. Comments on the critical habitat proposal may be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Office, attn: John Young, Bull Trout Coordinator, 911 N.E. 11th Avenue, Portland OR 97232; faxed to (503) 231-.6243.

In addition, a series of public meetings and public hearings will be held in July and August. Times and locations will be posted on our Bull Trout website at <http://species.fws.gov/bulltrout> and publicized in local newspapers.

